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# INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Oil Contract Negotiations

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BARY

1. At the final sessions of the meetings between oil company officials and representatives of the Comité de Trabajadores Petroleros Pro Contrato Unico in Caracas, it was reported that COPEI and Union Republicana Democratica (URD) representatives took the lead in demanding acceptance of the contract as presented by the labor groups. The Communist and Accion Democratica (AD) groups stayed in the background. Following the end of the discussions, Hugo Soto Socorro, AD leader, told one of the oil officials that he knew the terms asked by the labor groups were impossible.
2. On 16 March it was reported that a symbolic strike had been called by URD labor leaders at Cardon, State of Falcon. The walkout was scheduled for 20 March 1951, but company officials doubted the possibility of its materializing then or later. No strike handbills were known to have been distributed in the oilfields, although rumors of stoppages had been reported in other fields.

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1. Discussions among labor, management, and the government were suspended on 15 March 1951. Oil company officials stated that the labor groups refused to make any offer of compromise from their basic demand and that this negative approach had been taken for the purpose of forcing the government to issue a decree settling the dispute and stating the terms. All political parties would theoretically benefit, as the government and any political party it might sponsor would be subject to attack on their handling of the problem.
2. Settlement by decree would allow the labor groups to reopen the matter by later repudiating the settlement. However, oil company officials believe that the individual workers in most areas will accept the increased benefits awarded them and will not participate in any strikes at this time. Trouble would probably occur in areas where there is strong union control, such as La Concepcion and Cabimas, but government forces would probably be strong enough to prevent prolonged strikes.

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